



Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line

Embrace. Inspire. Restore.

A Self-Sufficiency Program for Homeless Families

Newsletter, Spring 2015

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Opening Hearts and Opening Doors

Once again IHN – Main Line volunteers and supporters gathered for our 6th annual spring fundraiser, Opening Hearts and Opening Doors, on April 19. We want to thank Appleford in Villanova for providing a beautiful venue for this event. The John Grecia Band entertained the crowd as everyone relaxed and dined on Appleford's lovely terrace. Kathryn and Madeline Gleeson sold raffle tickets to a more than generous crowd. The raffle baskets were beautiful and the attendees were delighted when someone won a basket.

The dinner raised over \$37,000 for IHN – Main Line's self-sufficiency programs. We appreciate everyone who participated in the event by providing sponsorships, contributing to IHN, and of course, coming to the event. Amy Deahl-Greenlaw remarked, "It was so



Kathryn and Madeline Gleeson



The John Grecia Band

Thanks goes out to Susan Ayres and the Board of Directors for making the benefit a success. Without all our dedicated volunteers and committed congregations we would not be able to help the families with children we serve.

heartwarming to see and feel the energy, love and power of this diverse coalition of faiths and congregations. In every way, the event lived up to its worthy cause. Dedication to this cause and this organization was palpable. The event, like the organization, truly embodies the saying, (saying) 'it takes a village!'"



Joe and Maryann Blair

Photographer: Warren Ayres

A Special Thank You to the Sponsors of our Fundraiser

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Kim and Steve Sherlock

Photographer: Warren Ayres

Make a secure PayPal donation to IHN – Main Line through our website www.IHNCares.org by clicking on the Donate button.

Message from the Board Chairperson

On behalf of myself, and the entire Board, I thank all those who attended and supported our annual fundraiser, “*Opening Hearts and Opening Doors*”, as guests and as sponsors. Great weather, delicious food and the lively music of the John Grecia Band made it a wonderful celebration of our successes, and commitment to the mission of **Embracing** homeless families with children, **Inspiring** them with confidence and hope, and **Restoring** them, through their own hard work, to sustainably independent lives.



As we are no longer the recipient of government funds so contributions from individuals, our host and support congregations, foundation grants and sponsors are critical in order to sustain our program. Many ask how many we have served and since July 1, 2014 –April 2015 our program has benefitted 12 families and a few single women, so including children, that is 27 people whose lives have been changed by you, our investors! May we continue to faithfully serve our community.

VNA Foundation of Greater North Penn Grant

IHN – Main Line received a mini technology grant from the VNA Foundation of Greater North Penn. With their grant we were able to purchase two new computers for our office.
Thanks VNA Foundation of Greater North Penn!

Montgomery County Update

As you may recall from past updates, Montgomery County has established an initiative called Your Way Home (YWH). Through YWH the County has instituted a centralized call center which is charged with receiving all calls from County residents that are seeking shelter or housing assistance. The County has also created Housing Resource Centers that implement its rapid rehousing program. This program provides rental assistance to homeless families and single adults.

Through YWH the County is pressuring homeless agencies to conform to a one-size-fits-all model. They are asking shelters to relinquish their screening procedures to the County and to accept all referrals that are processed through their call center. Last fall IHN – Main Line made the decision that relinquishing our screening procedures was not in the best interest of our volunteers or our congregations and thus, we turned down all County funding.

IHN – Main Line is currently receiving referrals for our program from outside the YWH call center and since we do not accept County funding we are able to help families that cannot meet Montgomery County residency requirements. The YWH call center helps exclusively Montgomery County residents. However, many homeless families tend to be transient, moving between counties in southeastern PA. Additionally, most of our neighboring counties also have residency requirements to access homeless services. Our willingness to help these transient families has filled a need in our area.

Our families are still eligible for the County rapid rehousing program as long as they can prove Montgomery County residency for the past two months. At this time the County’s program is providing these families with first month’s rent/last month’s rent/security deposit and further rental assistance up to three months if necessary. Unfortunately there is a waiting list for this program and also a shortage of affordable housing, so not all eligible families are able to take advantage of this program.

Family Updates



Nakia

We heard recently from Nakia. You may remember her, she had three boys. She has been in the same apartment for about 5 years. She's working at Aflac and getting married next year. Her oldest, Jaquan, is 19 and at Ursinus College, her second, Jamere, is 16 and in 11th grade. He is still playing the violin (Jamere was given a violin by a volunteer when he was in our Network) and Jaylon her youngest is also doing well.

Cassandra

Cassandra and her daughter, Maranda, were in our Network this past winter. They were a pleasure to have in our program and even Maranda, a teenager, did well. Cassandra had a job while she was with us and near the end of her stay received a promotion at work. We moved Cassandra to the third floor transitional unit at our Day Center after her three months in the Network, so she could have a little more time to adjust to her promotion and find a place for her and her daughter to live. They will remain in the transitional unit until the end of this school year so that Maranda will not have to change schools during the school year. We expect good things for these two. You can expect to see them again. Once they become settled they hope to give back by volunteering for IHN – Main Line.

Natasha

Natasha joined our Housing for Success Program last summer. She and her son moved into an apartment in Jeffersonville. She is currently attending classes in cosmetology at the Starr Career Academy in Audubon. She is looking for a part time job to supplement her income and working with her case manager on her goals.

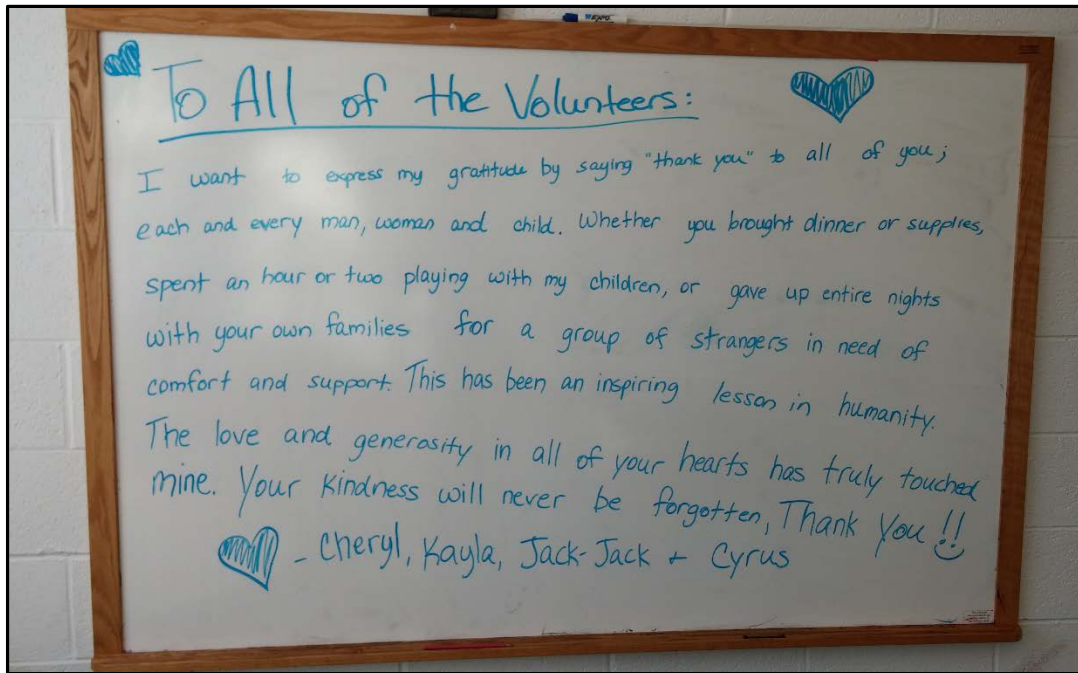
Candace

Candace and her two daughters were with us back in 2011. She has recently stopped by to see how we are doing. She lives and works in the Ambler area. Her daughter SeaAnna is in first grade and Saraya is in kindergarten. They are doing well.

Matching Gifts

Make your contribution worth more with a matching gift from your company. Many companies have matching gift programs. They will match your gift to IHN – Main Line dollar for dollar up to a certain amount. All you will need to do is fill out their matching gift form and send it along with your donation to IHN – Main Line. Some companies that have Matching Gift Programs:

Comcast	Merck
Exxon Mobile Corporation	Pfizer
Glaxo Smith Kline	QVC
ICG	Saint Gobain
Johnson and Johnson	Vanguard



To All of the Volunteers: I want to express my gratitude by saying “thank you” to all of you, each and every man, woman and child. Whether you brought dinner or supplies, spent an hour or two playing with my children, or gave up entire nights with your own families for a group of strangers in need of comfort and support. This has been an inspiring lesson in humanity. The love and generosity in all of your hearts has truly touched mine. Your kindness will never be forgotten, Thank You!!
Cheryl, Kayla, Jack-Jack and Cyrus

Volunteer Background Checks – A New PA Law

Beginning July 1, 2015, an adult applying for an unpaid position as a volunteer and who is responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children will need clearances according to a new Pennsylvania law, PA Act 153. These background checks include a Pennsylvania Criminal History Record, a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and a Federal Criminal Record Check.*

All IHN – Main Line volunteers who are present while our Network participants are at their congregation (6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.) are required to get these background checks. New volunteers will be asked to get the clearances prior to volunteering and will be given the Background Check Packet at the Volunteer Orientation Training, beginning July 1, 2015. Existing volunteers will be asked to get the clearances by July 1, 2016 and receive the packet from their coordinator during their hosting week.

Volunteers will retain the original background check documents and mail copies to IHN – Main Line. All documentation of each volunteer’s background checks will be tracked and stored in a locked cabinet in the IHN – Main Line Executive Director’s office.

For more information consult the [Department of Human Services Frequently asked Questions about Act 153](#).

*Exception to obtaining a Federal Criminal Record Check: Section 6344.2 (B.1) of Act 153 permits an exception related to the federal background check. The FBI check may be waived for a prospective unpaid volunteer if they have been a resident of this Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period and the volunteer “swears or affirms in writing” that they have not been convicted of any crime, in another state, similar to the convictions disqualifying a person in PA. Volunteers meeting this exemption will be asked to fill out and sign an Affirmation of Exemption to Federal Criminal Record Check Form.

Volunteer Highlights

Eliza

Eliza Nunnelee, a senior at Friends Central and member of St. Luke Church, loves to support the good folks at Our Mother of Good Counsel when they host IHN. She especially likes to take care of the young children while the adults settle in after dinner. She helps out wherever she's needed though. In January, when there were no young children, she had a good time connecting with a 13 year old girl, as she helped to serve the dinner. Sometimes we adults get so busy with the work, we forget to connect with folks. It's good to have someone like Eliza show what's possible.

The Capewells

Main Line Unitarian Church has a relatively new family, the Capewells, who have thrown themselves into the IHN volunteer pool. They are quite young and the mother, Megan is the amazing mother of four little girls. For three hosting weeks in a row they have taken on the most difficult Saturday evening and overnight slots. That's mother, father and four little children providing fellowship and spending the night as a family camp out! During the last hosting week, they couldn't do Saturday and so took Sunday instead. Apparently the Capewells have made a strong family commitment to social action and are actively raising their kids as doers not viewers.

Endre

Endre Witthoef of True Grit Fitness, has been a key IHN volunteer at St. David's Church since 2007. Every Host Week, Endre provides an exercise class for the IHN mothers, mindful of their varying levels of fitness. Afterward, he discusses healthy eating habits, and more exercise options, often writing it all down for the moms. Each mother receives an exercise mat and bands, so they can continue working out on their own. Endre breathes fresh air into the lives of our IHN guests; they enjoy fun exercise, stress release, and the friendship of a truly good person. In addition to his IHN workout sessions, Endre also regularly signs up for Dinner and After Dinner with his wife and 2 daughters. The girls have grown up helping out with IHN, and the Witthoef family brings joy and good cheer whenever they volunteer. And yes, Endre often does an Overnight shift, too. What a blessing to our IHN Ministry.

The McKinneys

Lauren McKinney is a tried and true "regular" with IHN at the Church of the Redeemer. They can count on her to provide dinner and after-dinner fellowship each hosting week along with one or more of her family members, Roger, Andrew and Courtney. Andrew is senior in high school and is a favorite with the kids. He is known particularly for his mastery of soup bubbles! The McKinney family is a wonderful example of how IHN connects with other groups within Redeemer – youth, acolytes, and the vestry. All their participation is appreciated!

Sheri

Sheri Brutsch is one amazing IHN volunteer at Wayne Presbyterian Church. She heads up their set-up and break down crew. She is always the first one there with smiles, helping hands, energy, empathy, and organization. They absolutely couldn't do it without her support!

Make a secure PayPal donation to IHN – Main Line through our website www.IHNcares.org by clicking on the Donate button.

More Pictures From the Spring Fundraiser



How you can make a real difference in the life of a homeless family in need:

Volunteer your time: make a meal, turn a congregational space into a home for our families, help children with homework, or spend time with a homeless family. Contact Sue at 610-277-0977 to learn more about how you can volunteer.

Make a Donation: your tax-deductible contribution will go a long way towards helping our families reach self-sufficiency.

Donate by mail:
Send your tax-deductible check or
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IHN – Main Line
1449 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19401

Donate on-line:
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